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SHOULD OUR HIGH-SCHOOL COURSES IN LATIN BE EXTENDED DOWNWARD INTO THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES? AN OUTLINE OF A DIS- CUSSION¹

I. THE POINT OF VIEW OF A DEPARTMENT OF LATIN

PROFESSOR ANDREW F. WEST

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1. Power to think well and power to express well what we think are the two fundamental intellectual objects of a satisfactory secondary education. There are other objects besides these two; they are very valuable, but they are supplementary, not fundamental.

2. The educational experience of the most civilized countries of the modern world, for now nearly four centuries, points out mathematics as the best generally available foundation-study for developing power to think well, as well as the best study to prepare for the sciences; and also points out Latin as the best generally available foundation-study to train pupils in power of expression, as well as to prepare them for literary, historical, and other humanistic studies. As a matter of fact, no great modern system of secondary education has been constructed without giving a central and ample place to mathematics and Latin. If the best educational experience of the modern world is

¹ The following abstracts are of addresses which will open a discussion of the subject at the Classical Conference at Ann Arbor, Mich., March 28. They are presented in advance of the meeting in order to afford to those who will attend an opportunity for previous reflection and study. Superintendents of schools, principals, and teachers who are interested in the subject are invited to come to the conference and take part in the general discussion which will follow the two addresses by Dean West and Professor Whitney. Programmes of the meetings may be obtained by addressing Mr. LOUIS P. JOCELYN, Secretary of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club, S. Division Street, Ann Arbor, Mich. Some considerations bearing upon the extension of the high-school Latin course may be found in an article on "Latin and Greek in American Education" in the *Educational Review* for February.

sufficient to settle this question, it is already settled, and settled decisively.

3. This does not conflict with establishing courses of secondary education without Latin, using the modern languages instead. But it has to be kept in mind that such courses, whatever their other value, are not and cannot be more than *specifically modern*, whereas Latin helps to make a course of study *universal* in intellectual value—and not least so by the immense help it gives in mastering the modern languages; so that, if the question should be, “What is the best way to master modern languages thoroughly and speedily?” the answer is, “Study Latin first.” This applies especially to the English language—so much so that a boy well trained in Latin grammar never needs to study English grammar. And the reason is that in studying Latin grammar he is not so much studying a grammar of some particular language as grammar in general.

4. Mathematics is already allotted a large amount of time in our schools, from the beginning of the child’s school education to the end of the high-school or academy. Latin, on the contrary, is not usually given more than five periods a week for four years. This amount of time, even adding the prescribed Latin courses of such colleges as require it, is much less than the amount allotted in Great Britain, France, and Germany, where Latin is usually given from eight to nine years and with more exercises a week than we allow. It is safe to say that, taking our education as a whole, we do not give more than half as much time to Latin as these other countries do. We cannot produce the best results without more time.

5. There is a good reason for this in the very nature of Latin as a study. It is not one of the easier studies. And yet it is not worth studying for this reason, but because it is highly useful, and therefore worth making the effort to master. The mastering of something worth while, and something that involves effort to surmount difficulties—thus and thus alone gaining more and more power through virile exercise of the mind—is the indispensable element in any education that will serve as a basis for the whole after-life. Now Latin is the one most generally avail-

able language-study that provides most fully just this training for American boys and girls.

Furthermore, the linguistic and literary sense develops slowly. Its development cannot be hastened, forced, or abridged without injury to the pupil. If we are allotted only four years in our secondary education in Latin, we cannot do in that time the work of eight or nine years. Four years' work needs four years' time; otherwise it is not properly laid out. The best that can be done in four years is therefore the first four years in Latin. We can perhaps stretch it a little, in view of the fact that the loss of all that follows is so great that even a hurried glimpse at the richer and more fruitful Latin that lies ahead is worth giving the pupil, if only to show how much more he would gain if he could have time to go farther. What a pity it is to cut off Latin studies at the very time when the early and less enjoyable disciplinary period is ending, and just before the more delightful cultural period begins—the period when the pupil begins to reap the rich reward, the full fruitage of his earlier study! Four years of Latin is good, but more is not only better, but far better, especially in its effect on the student who after his march through the Wilderness of Grammar is at last in sight of the Promised Land of Literature.

6. This is a promising time to lengthen the school courses in Latin. There is a vast increase in the number of pupils taking Latin. There is also a widespread and spontaneous movement away from the scattered miscellany of studies, away from a smattering of many things, and toward concentration of effort on a few studies of the highest educational value. This is a golden opportunity to purify and clarify our programmes of study; to assert the primacy of the principle that a good course of high-school study consists of a few things of central importance—Latin among them—taught fully and deliberately without haste or crowding or dispersion of effort, and all combining efficiently to one sole end: an end that is only too often forgotten, namely, an education that will serve as a basis for the noblest life and the whole life of the pupil.

II. THE VIEW-POINT OF A DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PROFESSOR ALLEN S. WHITNEY
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1. The reasons for the present imperfect adjustment between primary and secondary education are historical, and furnish no ground for retention, provided a better adjustment can be made.
2. At the end of the high-school course the average student is about two years behind the point which he should have reached.
3. The remedy is to project basal secondary studies back into the later grades of the primary schools.
4. This remedy is practicable, as shown both by theoretical considerations and by experience, in a well-organized and well-administered system of public schools.
5. Our present adjustment of secondary studies is antiquated, and at no point is reform more urgently needed.